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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

616366

COUNTRY

East Germany

DATE DISTR 15 March 1954

SUBJECT

Difficulties in Freight Car Repair

NO OF PAGES

PLACE

ACQUIRED

NO OF ENCL
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1. The rolling stock of the East German railway at the Kirchmooser railway repair depot is deteriorating rapidly because of the inability of the East German authorities to provide materials needed for maintenance and repair.
2. The Kirchmooser rail repair depot, which specializes in the overhauling and periodic inspection of freight cars of foreign manufacture now in possession of the East German railways, can re-manufacture and overhaul 900 freight cars per month. Actual output rate from July to December 1953 averaged approximately 300 repaired vehicles per month. The plant employs approximately 600 workers operating in two shifts, but efficiency at the installation is low because of frequent labor turnover, loss of key personnel, etc. There is allegedly a backlog of about 2,000 freight cars of foreign manufacture awaiting repair and overhaul at the Kirchmooser depot. The capacity of the plant cannot be fully exploited because of the lack of important materials. Since June 1953 the main bottleneck was the complete lack of bearing metal of good quality which the shop needs to repair running gear. The inability of the East German authorities to provide good quality new bearing metal containing appropriate amounts of tin, zinc, antimony and copper makes it necessary to re-use old bearing metal which through frequent re-melting has lost its desirable qualities. Frequent "hot boxes" are the result of the use of sub-standard new bearing metal or old re-used bearing metal in the general overhauling of freight cars.
3. At present a staff of approximately 200 engineers and scientists working in two shifts is trying to evolve a new bearing system which will use an aluminum-lead mixture instead of the standard tin-zinc antimony bearing metal used heretofore. The same scientists are investigating the possibilities of a new oiling system in conjunction with the experimental aluminum-lead bearings. They are trying to substitute for the oil distributing wick presently used a glass roller which will distribute the lubricant onto the axle.

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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4. The Kirchmoeser plant is further handicapped in the repair of freight cars by the total lack of seasoned hard woods used in the repair of freight car bodies. Small shipments of oak, beech and ash boards amounting to a total of approximately 300 cubic meters were received during the month of November 1953. The shipment reportedly originated in Rumania. The quantity delivered enabled the firm to furnish and place at the disposal of the Reichsbahn Directorate 150 freight cars, the running gear of which had already been repaired previously. The management of the Kirchmoeser repair shop is fully aware that no alleviation of the above-described shortages can be expected in the near future and for that reason requested from the Reichsbahn Directorate permission to cannibalize several hundred freight cars which have deteriorated to such a point that repair seems uneconomical.
5. An interchange of tools and materials between the Kirchmoeser repair shop and the Russian armor shop located in the same city takes place on an informal basis. The Russian shop is habitually short of lathe tools, twist drills and measuring instruments such as calipers, depth and thread gauges, etc. Russian personalities attached to the armor repair shop are unknown.

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